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PROPOSED DRAFT POLITICAL STATEMENT

Note by the Secretariat

1. Upon request of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, the Secretariat is circulating a text entitled "Proposed draft political statement", which was presented by the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Mostafa Tolba (Egypt), and the Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Monica Linn Locher (Switzerland).

2. The Commission agreed that the text of this document would be subject to further consultations and negotiations in the context of the preparations for and during the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly (New York, 23-27 June 1997). Furthermore, it was agreed that comments on this text should be sent by 30 May 1997 to the Chairman of the Commission through the Secretariat. Accordingly, delegations are invited to submit their comments to the following address - United Nations Secretariat, Division for Sustainable Development/DPCSD, Room DC2-2220, Two United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017; fax: (212) 963-4260.

PROPOSED DRAFT POLITICAL STATEMENT

1. At the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, held from 23 to 27 June 1997, we, Heads of State and Government* and other Heads of Delegation, have gathered here to review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21,[1] which addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century.

2. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, was a landmark event. At our Summit Meeting at that Conference we launched a new global partnership for sustainable development - a partnership which respects the interests of all, and protects the integrity of our global environment. It reflects a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level for cooperation on development and environment.

3. We acknowledge that a number of positive results have been achieved in several social, economic and environmental components of sustainable development since Rio. However, we are deeply concerned that the overall outlook for sustainable development is not much better today than what it was in 1992 in many parts of the world, especially in the least developed countries.

4. In this context, we emphasize that, given the accelerating pace of the globalization process, the persistence of poverty and the growing gap between developed and developing countries, the comprehensive implementation of Agenda 21 remains vitally important and is even more urgent now than ever. We reaffirm that all the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[2] shall continue to guide us in this comprehensive implementation. We also reaffirm the commitments we pledged at Rio; we consider them all as the foundation and long-term framework for sustainable development. We pledge to work together in good faith and in the spirit of partnership to achieve our commitments. We decide to move now from words to deeds.

5. We must reverse the trend of deterioration of the environment and natural resource depletion everywhere. We shall work together to improve the current terms of international cooperation. We will all work, at the national level, to ensure good governance and full respect of human rights.

6. We shall ensure that globalization trends have a positive impact on sustainable development. To this end we shall develop, strengthen and implement national and international environmental and social policies and integrate them fully with all economic policies. We reaffirm our commitment to the empowerment and full participation of major groups of society and we underline, in particular, the critical role of women in the achievement of sustainable development.

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* When the term "Government" is used, it will be deemed to include the European Community within its area of competence.

7. We acknowledge that unsustainable and wasteful patterns of consumption and production negatively affect the quality of life and well-being and inhibit economic and social development. We commit ourselves to accelerate moves to change such patterns. We further acknowledge that achieving this requires changes in human behaviour based on the best cultural, moral and environmental ethics.

8. We shall formulate or strengthen national policies and strategies geared to substantially reducing overall poverty in the shortest possible time, reducing inequalities and eradicating absolute poverty by a target date to be specified by each country in its national context. As a step in this direction, we intend, through effective national policies and adequate international assistance, including transfer of financial resources and of environmentally sound technologies, to reduce by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living today in absolute poverty.

9. We also fully support the establishment of other achievable timebound goals and targets within the next five and ten years as well as longer-term targets for moving towards sustainable development. Certain goals and targets should be differentiated according to levels of progress in different regions and of nations within regions; they should be equitable and should be measurable through agreed measurement tools.

10. We commit ourselves to the expeditious conclusion of ongoing negotiations related to sustainable development (climate change, biodiversity, ozone depletion, desertification, and prior informed consent relating to trade in chemicals) and to ensuring the participation of all States in relevant existing conventions, in their full implementation and in the compliance with their provisions.

11. We reaffirm our commitment to continue to press ahead with the implementation of the whole of Agenda 21 but we wish to bring particular focus in the discussions within the Commission on Sustainable Development in the next five years on ... [to be completed in the light of the outcome of the negotiations on the programme of work].

12. To deal with the major problems facing the world in a concerted global effort it is vital that more resources are devoted to sustainable development. We commit ourselves to mobilize domestic resources for that purpose. Developed countries commit themselves to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition with adequate financial resources from all sources. They reaffirm their commitment to the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance for developing countries. We stress that we will work to ensure that investment, including domestic and foreign direct investments, contribute to sustainable development. Developed countries also confirm their intention effectively to assist in and facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. The overall goal is to ensure that developing countries become full partners in the struggle against unsustainable development and the destruction of natural resources.

13. Within the framework of the World Trade Organization we shall promote the integration of sustainable development within the multilateral trading systems

and ensure that trade rules are compatible with strong and effective environmental policies. We shall ensure that the international economic climate is conducive to helping developing countries and countries with economies in transition to produce goods and services and to have access to markets. We shall support all efforts to ensure that goods and services produced by all countries are environmentally friendly.

14. We confirm the Commission on Sustainable Development as a main forum within the United Nations system for ensuring the full integration of economic and social development considerations with those of environmental protection. We reaffirm that the United Nations Environment Programme has been and shall continue to be the principle United Nations body in the field of environment and that we shall strengthen its standing and reform it to become the leading authority in that field.

15. Time is of the essence. We need every hand to reverse the deterioration trend. The attached programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21 is our vehicle to achieve that. We shall do all we can to ensure that the public at large feel ownership of this programme. Only then can the programme be fully implemented.

Notes

[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Ibid., annex I.